

OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



FUNCTIONAL AREA DESIGNATION, YG 1989

The functional area (FA) designation process for officers in Year Group 1989 is scheduled to begin in July 1994. If you are in this year group, a letter will be mailed to your home address, instructing you to complete a mark-sense preference form and comment sheet and return them by a specified date in September. It is important that you read and follow the instructions in completing and returning the preference form; otherwise, you will not have any input in the designation process.

The preference form asks for four possible FAs for your designation. Since you will spend a major portion of your career in your designated functional area, you should weigh all four choices carefully. We at Infantry Branch will make every attempt to place you in one of those choices, but the needs of the Army may dictate that it not be your first choice.

We encourage you to read DA Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization*, in the Officer's Ranks Update. The following are the functional areas currently available for infantrymen to consider:

FA 39, Psychological Operations/Civil Affairs

FA 41, Personnel Programs Management

FA 45, Comptroller

FA 46, Public Affairs

FA 48, Foreign Affairs

FA 49, Operations Research/Systems

Analysis

FA 50, Force Modernization

FA 52, Nuclear Weapons

FA 53, Systems Automation

FA 54, Operations, Plans, and Training

To help with this process, make sure your undergraduate and graduate col-

lege transcripts are in your file at Infantry Branch. If GRE or GMAT scores are available, ensure that they are forwarded for inclusion in your file. A current DLAB (Defense Language Aptitude Battery) score of 85 or above is required for either FA 39 or FA 48, but documented language ability is also favorably considered.

The designation process is currently scheduled to conclude in November or December, with the results to be released in January or February 1995.

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

A board member's first impression of you is the one made by your official photograph. Right or wrong, this impression sets the tone for the review of your file; it therefore demands careful preparation.

If you follow the official guidelines for the fit, wear, and appearance of the uniform, the photo will make the impression you want it to make. Of all the errors we see on official photos, the following are the most common errors:

- Leadership tabs or Infantry cord being worn.
- Trousers or sleeves too short or too long.
- Wrinkled trouser creases.
- Bulging pocket or coat flaps.
- Incorrectly placed awards and decorations.

Prepare for your photo first by researching Army Regulations 670-1 and 640-30 to ensure that your uniform and everything on it are correct and authorized for wear in an official photo. Next, have someone double-check your

efforts. (It is better for a friend, peer, or supervisor to find an error than the members of a selection board.) When you go to the studio for the session, take a friend to help you with the final preparations—taping, straightening, and aligning your uniform for the best possible result. It is risky, at best, to assume that a potentially overworked photographer can take the time to help you. And finally, *carry* your uniform to the photo lab on a hanger in a bag. Many photo labs will turn you away if you arrive for your photo wearing the uniform you intend to wear in the photo.

When you get your photo, check it carefully and, again, have someone else check it too. If it is not right, have another one made. Don't submit an inferior photo just to save time or trouble.

Feedback from promotion boards clearly indicates that the boards use an officer's photo to formulate their opinions about him and therefore their decisions concerning him. A current high-quality photo tells the board a great deal about you; it shows that you are concerned about your career and about the board results. Your careful preparation for and submission of a good photo ensures that the first impression you give a board member is a positive one.

